**My time at St. John’s School. ‘Kathleen Stansfield**

I first entered St. John’s School (then known as Lacey Green CE Primary School) in April 1964 for an interview for a post of ‘Junior schoolteacher with a special interest in Music’, to commence in September of that year. My husband- to- be had taken up the position of herdsman at Stocken Farm in January of that year and we were to be married in the August, so it was a dream job for me. Having only had 3 years of being a young teacher of quite deprived children on the outskirts of Manchester, I wasn’t sure I had the necessary experience and was incredibly nervous!

I needn’t have worried however, as I was interviewed by Mr. Douglas Anthony the headmaster, Lady Bateman and the Rev Bernard Houghton, all of whom put me at my ease and more importantly offered me the job, thus commencing approx 43 years association with the school.

When I began teaching at Lacey Green school in Sept 1964 there were just four classes, 2 infant classes and 2 junior classes, housed in what is at present the First School building. Mr. Anthony, the headmaster, taught the top juniors (9-1 1yrs). I taught the lower juniors (7 -9yrs), Miss M Agnew taught the older infants (known as ‘Transition’) and a Miss Briggs taught the reception class. The present reception classroom was the hall, where we did PE and had school assemblies etc. There was a small stage at the end by the present vehicular access and an old stove in the middle, which was removed soon after I arrived thankfully. The youngest children were taught in the small room off the present reception room and the staffroom was where the first school kitchen area now is.

I taught the same age group for 5 years, during which time the school continued to grow both in size and popularity, so that another class was formed and Mr. Anthony only taught for part of the time. By then I was in a temporary classroom in the playground, which was a great advantage when the main school heating system broke down, as it seemed to do at regular intervals, although I had to brave the elements at lunchtime! At that stage we had a wonderful cook in Mrs Leftwich and school dinners were served in an old Nissen style hut, where the present car park is now.

At this time the height of technology was the banda machine, where we prepared a ‘skin’ with maps, diagrams or prose and turned the handle attached to a drum, on which the ‘skins’ were clipped and run through ink. This was fine until it flooded and then what a mess we had! There were radio programmes such as ‘Singing Together’ which varied in quality.

There were no paid classroom assistants in the sixties, but once a week two of the parents, who were dinner ladies, stayed behind and helped me with needlework.

I did choir practice and recorder groups out of school time during the five years and we successfully took part in various music festivals. Children were given spelling lists to learn at home and also their times tables!

The vicar used to come into school once a week to teach the oldest children in the school and we all went into church at Christmas, Easter time and on Ascension Day as I recall. The house system was only used on Sports Day, as it was for most of my time at St. John’s, the names of the houses being Eagles, Hawks, Falcons and Kestrels.

From 1970 -1974 I was mainly at home with our two young sons, although I did do some supply work during that time and attended main events at the school. Then from 1974 - 1982 I was fully involved with the school as a parent and again did some supply work from time to time. I went in to fill the music coordinator’s post for two terms, but was not ready return to a permanent job at that time. During this time of course the school had more than doubled in size, with the new hall and classrooms having been added.

In 1983 I filled in for a maternity leave of absence, from which the permanent teacher did not return, and I became a permanent member of staff again until my retirement from full time teaching in 2001. When I resumed full time teaching the headmaster was Mr. David Green and we once again enjoyed excellent school dinners with Mrs. Diane Ronianski in charge. This time they were served in the school hall and staff ate with the children. In the 1980’s we had the equivalent of one full time classroom - assistant to share between the eight classes.

Mrs Gaynor Newbold followed David Green as the next head teacher and finally Mr. Stephen Coleman became the headmaster. There were a succession of caretakers over the years, but the longest standing were Mrs. Phyllis Matthews and finally ‘Mr. Mac’,

During my last full time period of teaching at the school I served on the Parent/Teacher committee for many years and once more was the music coordinator in charge of choir and recorders. For my final three or four years I introduced hand bell ringing, which proved very popular. We participated in -- various concerts within the community with choir, recorders and hand bells. With the drama group we also produced some memorable musical productions in school, including ‘Joseph’ and “Annie’.

We attended church for all the regular Christian festivals and at the beginning and end of every school term and throughout the last twenty years or so the vicar has come in to take assembly on Friday of each week. Also in this time St. John’s was constantly keeping pace with modern technology and the school boasted a computer centre and interactive whiteboards etc, by the time I finished.

After finishing full time teaching I did regular supply work at the school until 2005 and continued with the hand bell ringing, on a voluntary basis, until 2007, thus ending 43 very happy years of association with Lacey Green/ St. John’s School.